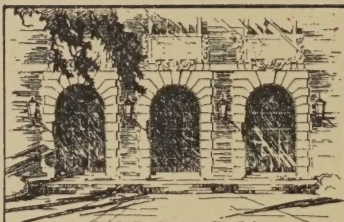


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Poems

By

Thomas Boyd



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**POEMS**

**BY**

**THOMAS BOYD.**



# POEMS

By

THOMAS BOYD.

DUBLIN :  
O'DONOGHUE & CO.

M. H. GILL AND SON, LTD.

1906.

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**A Large Paper Edition,** strictly limited to one hundred copies, is also issued at seven and sixpence per copy.

PRINTED BY CAHILL AND CO.,  
35, 36, 37 GREAT STRAND STREET, DUBLIN.

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LYRICS.



## BANBA.

I have seen thee, O Banba !  
There was storm upon Breaghy height,  
The scream of the storm in the night,  
And a hallowed silence fell  
On the winds and the foaming hell  
Of the seas when I saw thee arise  
With the lure of God in thine eyes :  
Not dark, as the hearts we bear,  
But enstarred everlastingly fair  
On the darkness, O Banba !

Thou art lovely, O Banba !  
Alone by the Western rocks !  
And the burning gold of thy locks,  
Down-streaming, a magical tide,  
Over shoulder and radiant side,  
In waves in whose shadows were lost  
The lives of thy sacrificed host,  
And in gleamings of curling crests,  
Still lift, as of old, our breasts  
With thy rapture, O Banba !

BANBA.

And we love thee, O Banba !  
Though the spoiler be in thy hall,  
And thou art bereft of all,  
Save only that Spirit for friend  
Who shapes all things in the end :  
Though thine eyes are a sword that has slain  
Thy lovers on many a plain,  
When glad to the conflict they pressed  
Drunk with the light of thy breast  
To die for thee, Banba !

Thou art mighty, O Banba !  
More rich in thyself alone  
Than that harlot upon a throne,  
Whose lure is on every flood  
And whose robes are the price of blood.  
She will pass with the shades that have  
passed :  
Thou wilt last with the Powers that last :  
Thou hast eaten of Bread Divine,  
Thou hast drunken Eternal Wine ;  
Thou art mighty, O Banba !

BANBA.

In rejoicing, O Banba !  
Thou hearest the far-off sound  
Of a river that rolls underground,  
That will rise till the daylight be won,  
Till it bursts, till it foams, in the sun.  
Thou hearest as from afar  
The golden thunders of war,  
The cries of thy conquering lords,  
The ringing, the singing of Swords  
That shall crown thee, O Banba !

## CLAN LIR.

O Lir! our father!  
We are under the curse  
Of the Evil Woman.  
Had'st thou been true—  
May we speak it who love thee?—  
To the mother who bore us  
We had not been here!

The dark enchantment  
Came from her hands  
Who lay in thy bosom,  
And the guiltless suffer  
On the world's cold waters,  
Changed as you see!

She has taken from us  
Our form and our beauty,  
The use of our being  
And the land of our love;  
Only our voices  
Are left us for singing  
In Western waters  
Our doom and our loss.

CLAN LIR.

Where screams the gannet  
Ere he falls, white-flashing,  
On his prey in the waters  
From his track in the skies;  
Where the beaked cormorant  
With black spread pinions  
Stands on cliff ledges,  
In his eyes a red fire;

Where clouded headlands  
Come striding seaward,  
And rise, black-horned,  
Through the smoke of storms;  
And in landless reaches,  
Far out on the billows,  
Where the snow-cloud scatters  
Its foam to the foam!—

There, to deaf waters  
And dark deaf caverns,  
And cold deaf stars  
We make our song;  
And our life is woven  
Into the living  
The golden fabric  
We weave in air.

CLAN LIR.

All the lost sweetness  
Of our darkened being  
Lives in our singing  
That dies in the seas;  
And we build in the darkness  
With human voices  
The world of our dreaming  
The world that we knew.

Again do we know them,  
The lost human faces,  
The kiss of our father  
And the touch of hands;  
Oh! the birds of the valley,  
The woodland murmur,  
And the inland waters,  
We hear them again!

And a star whitely beaming  
Grows out of the darkness,  
It lifts, it uplifts us,  
It sparkles with joy;  
For she who has cursed us,  
The burning Aoife,  
The Evil Woman,  
Has left us one hope:

## CLAN LIR.

That while our voices  
Sound the sweet Gaelic,  
The sweet human Gaelic,  
Oúr nature is ours,  
And again shall we enter  
The place of our people,  
Renewed in our being,  
In form as in song.

Long dark in the mountains,  
O Lir! lay thy palace,  
But now they are lighting  
The feast fire again;  
These wings, that were curses,  
Are bringing us near thee;  
Light streams from the doorway,  
We wing to our home.

## TO THE LEANAN SIDHE.

Where is thy lovely perilous abode?  
In what strange phantom land  
Glimmer the faerie turrets whereto rode  
The ill-starred poet band?

Say, in the Isle of Youth hast thou thy home,  
The sweetest singer there,  
Stealing on wingèd steed across the foam  
Thorough the moonlit air,

And by the gloomy peak of Errigal,  
Haunted by storm and cloud,  
Wing past, and to thy lover there let fall  
His singing robe . . . and shroud?

Or, where the mists of bluebell float beneath  
The red stems of the pine  
And sunbeams strike through shadows, dost thou  
breathe  
The word that makes him thine?

TO THE LEANAN SIDHE.

Or, is thy palace entered through some cliff  
When radiant tides are full  
And round thy lover's wandering starlit skiff  
Coil in luxurious lull?

And, would he, entering on the brimming flood,  
See caverns vast in height,  
And diamond columns crowned with leaf and bud,  
Glow in long lanes of light,

And there, the pearl of that great glittering shell,  
Trembling behold thee lone,  
Now weaving in slow dance an awful spell,  
Now still upon thy throne?

Thy beauty!—ah, the eyes that pierce him through  
Then melt into a dream.  
The voice that sings the mysteries of the blue  
And all that Be and Seem!

Thy lovely motions answering to the rime  
That ancient Nature sings,  
That keeps the stars in cadence for all time  
And echoes through all things.

TO THE LEANAN SIDHE.

Whether he see thee thus, or in his dreams  
Thy light makes all lights dim :  
An aching solitude from henceforth seems  
The world of men to him.

Thy luring song, above the sensuous roar,  
He follows with delight  
Shutting behind him Life's last gloomy door  
And fares into the Night.

## ANGUS IN THE NORTH.

Yonder where Errigal shoulders  
A roof of stars and of cloud,  
Alone on the brow of the mountain  
Who art thou that singest aloud?

Dost thou come from the Dawn of the World?  
Dost thou come from the House of the Sun?  
From woodlands in golden mists of dawn  
When Man and the Earth were One?

Thy white limbs shine through the shadows  
And thy wind-loved locks are curled  
From the white uplifted throat  
That sings in the grey of the world.

And, ah! thy shining eyes  
Are alive with the soul of light  
That was living before the sun  
Or the quiet fires of night!

## ANGUS IN THE NORTH.

And the birds that were born of thy kisses  
Are around thee on trembling wings,  
And sing with thy loud sweet singing  
And shine with thy clairseach strings.

It is Angus who wanders singing  
A wizard song that brings  
From the depths of the uttermost sky  
The Swan of the Wounded Wings.

She falls from the starry spaces  
On wings that wounded be,  
Snow-white, and eddying downwards,  
As a leaf falls from a tree.

And here where desolate Seiseah  
Shines black by her black cliff-walls,  
The stars in the water are broken  
In foam, as the Wanderer falls.

Hither, come hither, O Angus,  
The cliff and the shore await,  
And only the dark rock re-echoes  
The cry of the Swan for her mate.

ANGUS IN THE NORTH.

Again comes the cry of the Lover,  
And again it is asked "Who calls?"  
And "Angus, Angus," is sounded  
Again from the dark cliff-walls.

And I who watch by the waters,  
The heart in my breast grows cold,  
Lest the Loved and the Lover leave us,  
And wing through the skies as of old.

On the floor of thy eastern palace  
The lowly docken is green,  
And Boänn sits lone by her river  
Lamenting the days that have been.

And here the great hands of the mountains  
Have built up a valley for thee,  
Where the tree and the rock sound forever  
To the harp of the mighty sea.

## THE HEATH.

Through the purple dusk on this pathless heath  
Wanders a horse with his rider, Death.  
The steed like his master is old and grim,  
And the flame in his eye is burning dim.

The crown of the rider is red with gold,  
For he is lord of the lea and the wold.  
A-tween his ribs, against the sky  
Glimmer the stars as he rideth by.

A hungry scythe o'er his shoulder bare  
Glints afar through the darkening air,  
And the sullen clank of his horse's hoof  
Frightens the Wanderer aloof.

## THE KING'S SON.

Who rideth through the driving rain  
At such a headlong speed?  
Naked and pale he rides amain  
Upon a naked steed.

Nor hollow nor height his going bars,  
His wet steed shines like silk,  
His head is golden to the stars  
And his limbs are white as milk.

But, lo, he dwindles as a light  
That lifts from a black mere,  
And, as the fair youth wanes from sight,  
The steed grows mightier.

What wizard by yon holy tree  
Mutters unto the sky  
Where Macha's flame-tongued horses flee  
On hooves of thunder by?

THE KING'S SON.

Ah, 'tis not holy so to ban  
The youth of kingly seed :  
Ah ! woe, the wasting of a man  
Who changes to a steed.

Nightly upon the Plain of Kings  
When Macha's day is nigh  
He gallops; and the dark wind brings  
His lonely human cry.

## LOVE ON THE MOUNTAIN.

My love comes down from the mountain  
Through the mists of dawn;  
I look, and the star of the morning  
From the sky is gone.

My love comes down from the mountain,  
At dawn, dewy-sweet;  
Did you step from the star to the mountain  
O little white feet?

O whence came your twining tresses  
And your shining eyes,  
But out of the gold of the morning  
And the blue of the skies?

The misty mountain is burning  
In the sun's red fire,  
And the heart in my breast is burning  
And lost in desire.

LOVE ON THE MOUNTAIN.

I follow you into the valley ·  
But no word can I say;  
To the East or the West I will follow  
Till the dusk of my day.

## I WOULD GO INTO THE WEST.

FROM THE GAELIC.

I would go into the West,  
Lonely here I cannot rest;  
    Were I only in the West  
    I would never more return.  
I would come to my delight,  
I would climb the highest height,  
And yet higher still above  
Would I follow mine own love,  
    And would pluck the scented branch  
    Of the blossom and the thorn.

Dark the heart within me borne,  
Dark as wild-sloe of the thorn;  
    As the stone of darkness dire  
    Thrown into the smith's red fire,  
As the shadowed foot that falls  
Black within white gleaming halls,  
It is heavy, it is dark,  
And my laughter none may mark;  
    It is dead with sorrow dark  
    And the weight of my desire.

I WOULD GO INTO THE WEST.

Ah, my heart is overborne,  
Broken, broken, bruised and torn,  
    As the ice that melts and breaks  
    In black waters of the lakes,  
As the fruit of broken rind,  
Withered in the bitter wind,  
As the maiden of the poor  
Torn from out her father's door  
    When the lighted feast is o'er  
    And the lover love forsakes.

Oh, my love is dark and bright—  
Dark as berries of the night,  
    Bright as berries all aglow  
    That in sunny gardens grow.  
Sweet for lip and sweet for eye,  
Dewy-bright the living dye.  
Dark as, on the mountain track,  
Wild heath-berries, azure-black.  
    Oh, his head, black-curled, has lain  
    Often on a breast of snow.

It is time that I should go  
From this place of joy and woe.  
    Where I hear the heavy sound  
    Of the name that I have found;

I WOULD GO INTO THE WEST.

Where they take in cruel theft  
All the little, love has left.  
I will leave this bitter town,  
Where the dark words drag me down,  
    Where the very ground is cold,  
    And the very stones—they wound.

Bitter blame on love I lay;  
I with love am cast away.  
    Little knew that woman's son  
    Of the riches he had won,  
Or he would not leave my heart  
Aching, breaking with the smart .  
Yet I look that we may meet,  
Yet I seek in field and street;  
    But no more beneath the sun  
    Shall I meet him—he is gone!

## I BRING A SWORD.

The White Christ walked through Eirinn  
And His heart was filled with ire;  
He shone as He came from the morning sun,  
And His eyes were burning fire.

He looked on the mountain walls,  
On the green plains outspread,  
On the roof of blue and of gold-ribbed cloud,  
And these were the words He said:

"This is My Father's House,  
And this is your Promised Land,  
Fair as it shone in the dawn of days  
When it rose beneath His hand.

"This is My Father's House,  
And would you leave it to Me  
To drive them forth with a bloody whip,  
The hucksters, to the sea?

I BRING A SWORD.

“ Ye know My love and My fear,  
Would ye know My hatred as well?  
Ye have traced the wilds with my hunted Deer,  
Let ye fight the Dogs of Hell ! ”



IN THE EARLY WORLD.



## BALOR.

What fools are men to plough the earth for gain  
Or sweat upon the mountains in the chase !  
I know an easier way to take my fill.  
Men are my bees : I let them hive their store,  
And when they hope to take the honey sweet,  
I smoke them from the comb and feast at ease.  
I let them hunt and seize the hunting-spoil.  
In the fat vales they pasture milky kine,  
And when the hide grows silken I appear  
And take the best, just reddening once my club.  
At sea the busy fools come far with cloths  
And gold, and there I catch them as they pass  
Between Torinis and the Ridge of Fire,  
And with my thumb upon each squeaking throat  
I end them ; and their foolish things are mine.  
It is a sport ; for they have nothing worth ;  
Nothing to fill me. But, the pretty gauds  
I throw into the tower where Ethne lies,  
Baubles for women.

BALOR.

Better, all thick and slab  
The yellow milk that ripens in broad vats,  
Or smoking flesh come hissing from the spit,  
To eat when the sun goes out and I relax,  
Loosening my limbs and battenning in the cool.

They anger me, the little breed of men,  
And, most of all, their druids, stingless bees,  
Stingless and honeyless, moping on the rocks,  
Not worth the killing. Men I understand  
Who fight for beeves and women and fat lands,  
For I am cribbed of pasture on this rock,  
Bare as a hungry platter, barren and salt :  
And knew I not a secret of my own,  
To feed my kine within their rocky pen,  
On living fodder, reddening so their horns,  
But leaving still their milk whiter than foam  
That oozes from the marsh plant's wounded stem,  
I would not leave the mannikins their lands !  
But, druids ! How I angered him at last  
The hoary dreamer that I strove to kill,  
My club still swerving vainly in the air  
And leaving him without scathe ! I, maddened,  
then  
Took up his boy—a suckling of the whey  
These fools call wisdom—caught him by the heel  
And by the neck, and pulled him, shrieking, piece-  
meal.

## BALOR.

My heart was eased to feel the sinews start  
And the joints crunch and part. I laughed aloud,  
While he, the withered elder, turned to stone :  
Staring with throat and eyes and lifted hands.  
What did he hiss at last ? That I should die :  
That from my child would come a child of light  
To slay me. Well, the fool but robbed his threat  
Of danger in the telling. Men must blab,  
Rousing the bees before they smother them.  
He told, and I am safe. I might have walked  
Like the dull bear into the bated trap  
Had he not taught me how to cheat the gods.

Now I have locked my daughter in the rock  
And she shall never see the face of man.  
And yet, were it not safer to forget  
To bring her food ? But she is very fair,  
A spoil for champions, worth the blood of kings :  
I cheat them when I hide her so away ;  
The spoil of a kingdom hoarded in the dark.

## AN DONN CUAILGNE.

The sons of gods have died for him,  
The sons of mortals die;  
He breathes death from his nostrils' rim,  
Death lightens from his eye.

Slowly he journeys to the West  
Trampling the sons of light;  
Beneath his hooves their limbs are pressed  
Red in the wastes of night.

The shadows of the primal wars  
Darken his giant sides,  
And his harness gleams with glimmering stars  
That light his mighty strides.

His voice is of the Deep; his path  
With the fair dead is strewn;  
Awful, upon his brow he hath  
The great horns of the moon.

## ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

CUCHULLIN.

LAEGH (his charioteer).

THREE WOMEN.

CUCHULLIN :

Red fires of war on yonder mountain peak  
That tongue the darkening air, dimming the stars,  
Ye guide me on my way. Yet dark it is,  
And very dark, what lies unknown before me.  
My spirit lonelier than the winter oak,  
Companioned only by a mourning wind,  
Grows cold before the heavy breath of night.  
I hear deep muttered sighs as of farewell—  
As if this day had folded up from me  
Forever all the good things of the light.

LAEGH :

Our horses tremble as in fear, their sides  
Are white with foam, and their proud, shining heads  
Cower in the dust.

ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

CUCHULLIN :

It is my gloomy thought  
That comes upon them darkly. Let us rest.

LAEGH :

Nay, their great hearts are shaken, as thine own,  
By some dark spirit of the unseen world.  
And, lo ! as shaped from the swift-moving air,  
Three women come towards us from the dark.

CUCHULLIN :

The deep has opened : the great hour has come.

THE FIRST WOMAN :

Pass not the shadow of yon flaming hill,  
But to thy North return !  
Fly from the coming of thine Hour of Ill  
Lest all Emania mourn !  
A roar but now upon the midnight broke,  
A noise of burning woods  
And of the fall of thine allotted oak  
Amid the fiery floods.

## ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD

CUCHULLIN :

My sinews that had slackened but this hour  
Grow great again to hear thee. I will drink  
Deep of the wine of danger and become  
Drunken with battle, greatening to a god.

THE FIRST WOMAN :

Return and reign in power,  
And to thy sword shall fall the blossomed bough;  
And thou shalt have a kingdom for a dower,  
A light upon thy brow.  
The Sun shall league with thee, and all thy land  
Grow fair with fruit and corn;  
Thy rivers shine with fish; thy warrior band  
Make all thy foes a scorn.

CUCHULLIN :

Power sleeps in prosperous days a dreamless sleep  
We know the joy of power only in strife,  
And highest joy in the great hour of all  
When all our strength goes forth, though we may die

ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

THE SECOND WOMAN :

I know a holy grove  
Where light breaks down from heaven,  
And from the whisper of the oak is given  
The very breath of love.  
Thy beard shall whiten there in peace,  
Thy spirit grow in power, thine anguish cease;  
Thy foot shall love the green, thine eyes the blue.  
And thou shalt learn what mortal never knew.

CUCHULLIN :

The fever of my deeds yet burns in me :  
No calm can still the raging of this brow.

THE SECOND WOMAN :

Slowly, as from sleep,  
Out of the great deep  
Arise the clouds that float in golden light,  
And slowly, from the troubled spirit, slowly  
Are born the visions holy  
That shine across the deep of mortal night.  
Join thou the greater clan,  
And move untroubled by the breath of man.

### ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

The earth shall teach thee, and the wandering air  
The deep things of the world lay bare;  
Thou shalt have gladness in the light,  
And to thy slumber dreams shall throng—  
Dreams from the starry legions of the night  
And slumber lulled by planetary song.

### CUCHULLIN :

I shall seek nothing in the hidden world,  
Nor leave my own. No shining shapes of mist  
Can stay my arrow speeding to its mark.

### THE THIRD WOMAN :

Come! I will lead thee to a cavern blest,  
In a dark mountain rising in the west,  
Where lies the Flower o' the World, dreaming alone  
Of thee, Cuchullin, the beloved one.

Her eyelids have been hushed a thousand years,  
Yet they are fairer than the lids of dawn,  
And fairer yet the glimmering lights withdrawn

That shine, or darkle inward on her fears.

She lies in dream,

She bides thy coming, she awaits the gleam  
That brings the tides of light into her skies;  
Already to her deep enchanted eyes  
The vision of her Awakener appears;

ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

And in her gladdened ears  
Soundeth a voice—thy voice—that says,  
Arise!

Come thou with me  
And lead her forth into the vale.  
All things may be forgotten in her eyes!—  
Deep grief and hollow glee,  
The rede of men and gods, an empty tale,  
All things—when on her breast  
Thy shadowed brain hath rest  
And in the peace of love forever lies.

CUCHULLIN :

Like dragon gold, beneath the bitter lake,  
The treasure of love is lost in time's dim gulf;  
Cold is my breast to bright, entangling hair  
When fires of war are lit upon the hills.  
A spirit within me mightier than my will,  
Although my will moves with it, masters me;  
And all my Past—my greater self—now urges  
To deeds beyond the weakness of the hour.  
Yea, as a wave whose might has slowly gathered  
In raging with the dragon-winged wind  
Recoils not, though it would, from the dread rock,  
But dies in anger, foaming to the skies.

ON THE ROAD TO THE FORD.

Dearer is self-fulfilment to the strong  
Than the entranced oblivion of love;  
Dearer than hollow sway over mighty clans  
Or fruitless knowledge; dearer even than life.

LAEGH :

The Three are lost in the devouring dark,  
As lights blown out.

CUCHULLIN :

Our horses shudder still,  
But now with cold, not fear.  
Gather the reins,  
And forward to the hosting, ere the day,  
Racing the scouts of dawn across the night.

## ON THE DEATH OF CUCHULAINN.

The last of the mighty deeds of the Son of Suaitim  
Burns through ages dim.  
Clear-flaming over Time's illimitable vale  
To all the host of the Gael.

The Tribes of the Air screamed around him and the  
Three dread Women of Blood  
In the battle against him stood;  
And the three tragical cries of the Waves of Erin  
sound  
As he falls with his death wound.

But in silence he plucks the spear of Lewey out of  
his side  
And stays with his hand his life-tide.  
He crawls to the river and drinks; then walks to a  
pillar stone,  
Without weakness or moan,

## ON THE DEATH OF CUCHULAINN.

And he binds himself to the pillar, while his head  
falls on his breast,  
And the Mighty One takes his rest.  
Then the fear of greatness falls on his enemies and  
in fear  
They watch, and come not near;

And watching, they see in the darkening skies above  
him, the wing  
Hovering, of some Evil Thing,  
And a bird of ravin alights on his shoulders; and  
then they said:  
"Now we know he is dead."

For not on a bed of down had he prophesied he  
would meet  
Death, but upon his feet.  
And so he died as he stood, alone by that sacred  
stone,  
Daring the Known and the Unknown.

So died Cuchulainn, and so may he die, should  
all things fail,  
The last of the tribe of the Gael.

## CLIACH THE HARPER.

To win the dark Bove Dearig's child  
Out of the fairy throng  
The harper, Cliach, pale and wild,  
Pours out his life in song.

He stands, the Beggar of the Rocks,  
Who lay at feasts of kings,  
And still the sullen mountain mocks  
His harp of mighty strings.

The shouting peoples of the air,  
The dark tribes of the glen,  
Are hushed when in his voice they hear  
The agony of men.

The white wolf listens in the wood,  
Her famished side is dry,  
Her three days' litter whine for food,  
But human glows her eye.

CLIACH THE HARPER.

His song would lull the storm of war  
Or ope the foeman's dun  
Or move the moveless northern star,  
Or stay the setting moon.

His burning hands among the strings  
Assist his voice of wail;  
And loud his golden wailing rings,  
Filling the hollow vale.

But silent lies the fairy hold,  
Its walls all black and grim;  
The mountain god is dull and cold  
And will not yield to him.

And she, the daughter of the hill,  
A star hid in the night,  
Is silent, feasting on his ill,  
His woe her fierce delight.

Her joy is in the darkening mind,  
The unremembered name,  
The songs that die upon the wind,  
The life that wastes in flame.

CLIACH THE HARPER.

A hundred morns have lit the east  
Since first his song began,  
The winter storms have risen and ceased,  
Yet sings the stricken man.

His brooding will, upon the gloom,  
Creates her vision fair;  
Slowly it gathers life and bloom  
And shines upon the air.

The midnight dark obeys his will  
And yields her up in light—  
A shadow!—for the mountain still  
Enfolds her from his sight.

He sees her vision in the skies  
Among the lights of dawn;  
White limbs, bright hair, and star-clear eyes  
That glimmer, and are gone.

Yea, in his dreams of sunken days  
And beauty lost of old,  
A star that burns through sunset rays,  
She glitters white and cold.

CLIACH THE HARPER.

In vain his song, in vain his grief;  
No breathing form appears,  
And, in his shining eyes, belief  
Is drowned in bitter tears.

Tears that are not as holy dew  
Falling on sleeping flowers,  
To wake them to their lives anew  
In golden morning hours.

And yet not vain; for deep beneath  
The earth, where spirits dwell,  
They wake to love and human faith  
The Spirit of the Well;

And living waters, pure and bright,  
Break upwards through the ground:  
They flow, they leap, they laugh in light,  
Till song in song is drowned;

Till Cliach, paler than in air,  
Below the water lies,  
And cold arms calm his long despair  
Whether he lives or dies.

CLIACH THE HARPER.

No more the mountains dark awake  
To mock him as he raves;  
Only his harp upon the lake  
Murmurs amid the waves.

## THE BRIDE OF RUAD.

Red the western woods were gleaming  
While I lay upon the strand  
Where the Delvin sparkles, streaming  
Out across the golden sand.  
Long I listened to the singing  
Of the tides in ebb and flow,  
When there came a wild voice bringing  
Back a tale of long ago.

"I am Lir's despairing daughter,  
And I come from out the deep,  
And I lift above the water  
My forsaken babes, and weep.  
Now my house is cold and lonely,  
And my bed in darkness lies,  
Where I sorrowed, hearing only  
In the dark my children's cries.

"Ah, that night a ship came winging  
On the sea with moon-white wings,  
Over the dark waters bringing  
Ruad, flower of Erin's kings!

### THE BRIDE OF RUAD.

Ruad, we were happy under  
The green world of singing seas.  
Now, our lives are torn asunder;  
Joy has fled, and now love flees!

"Yet these arms thou hast forsaken  
Shall enwind thee once again.  
I will take, as thou hast taken;  
Turning all thy life to pain.  
On this night of thy espousal,  
Thou shalt leave thy mortal bride,  
And thy kingdom's high carousal,  
At my bidding from the tide.

"Here where Delvin's waters mingle  
With the sands and with the flood,  
Thou shalt see the reddened shingle  
Bright with morselled limbs and blood.  
Woe, forever, to the father,  
But the mother shall go free;  
Thou thy children's bones may'st gather,  
While I laugh amid the sea!

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

Three days are ours, O Kian ! until Balor  
Loosens his dreaded sail on yonder shore  
Where burns his feasting fire among the woods,  
A moon of storm that flames across the floods.

Rest here thy head, lest I should see thine eyes,  
And so forget all speech : Life's great surprise  
May lessen with the veiling of thy gaze,  
And I may speak the brief tale of my days.  
Ah, now my father's hatred is twice blessed  
That saved me as a jewel for thy breast  
Within the hold of yonder cruel tower.  
There had I died, but Love, the wizard power,  
Before thy coming opened the guarded doors  
And gave me life within these barren shores.  
Loving my women for their songs that told  
Of all the life I never might behold,  
My love awaked their love even as the sun  
Wakens sweet flowers on cruel cliffs of stone.  
Balor's dark people serve but in his sight,  
And with his presence passes all his might ;

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

When his black galley dipped below the sea  
The women laughed and sang and set me free  
To roam at will in the forbidden isle.  
There to my thought each gloomy crag would smile.  
I caught each gleam of beauty to my heart,  
And lived in joy, not lonely, though apart;  
I sang unto the white birds of the sea  
Floating on wave or air, bright-winged and free:  
I watched the swift fish gliding dim within  
The purple woods under the ocean green,  
And took the sweet, salt kisses of the flowers  
That lift their little heads in foam-flecked bowers.

Often I gazed around the sky's wide span  
And saw in clouds the fabulous race of man:  
Armies with scarlet banners in the west;  
Empurpled dragons of bright starry crest;  
Pale golden hosts of women in the blue  
Dissolving in the deep wherein they grew;  
Vast continents of gold, moved on the winds—  
The swift that scatters and the slow that binds.  
And oft the world would die into my dreams,  
My spirit ranging on the sun's wide beams,  
And, as a cloud by winds and the sun's fire  
Is shaped, I shaped all things to my desire.

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

And so thou camest, born of burning dreams,  
From the deep life within the life that seems :  
Thou, the fair orb by which myself I know,  
That world with world may mingle in joy and grow.

Thou camest. I was wandering in the night  
Under the lucid stars all great with light :  
The young moon, bare upon her shadowed throne,  
Listened in heaven to the water's moan,  
That even in windless hours, from cave and reef,  
Utters forever a mysterious grief.  
The winds were still, and yet the ocean rolled  
Slowly, great moonlit waves, half gloom, half gold.  
Didst thou not fear to come from thy far shore  
Adventuring in the shadow of Balor  
On such a night? I saw thee on the tide  
Swim to the cove upon the eastern side  
Where sheltered waters lay, silent and black,  
And there the sea glowed, sparkling in thy track,  
And on thine arms and rippled shoulders fire,  
Soft-sparkling, ran, in amorous desire.

Wondering, I watched from the high cliff above  
And saw thee touch the shingle of the cove.  
I heard the pebbles and the sea shells ring  
Beneath thy foot, or did the sea tribe sing?  
Then thou didst sink as dead upon the beach,  
So near the dragon and the spoil in reach.

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

All things fell dark awhile, then, glimmering, grew  
Shining and strange. As in a dream I flew  
And waked my women from the midnight sleep  
And heard their counsels, terrible and deep.  
Some said to slay thee, loosening in the night  
Huge stones that overhung thee on the height;  
And some to wait the coming of Balor,  
Locked in the lis, on the wild, outer shore;  
But one, whose words were ever wise and strange,  
Spoke of their ancient ills and urged revenge:  
To let thee live, though great Balor should die,  
And all agreed with Hatred's eager cry.

That night we came with robes and wine and bread  
Down the steep pathway of the cliff that led  
With rugged toil to the enshadowed cove  
Where, like the god of a star, thou layest, love!  
And there I watched until the dawn illumed  
The sea and wavered over thee fire-emplumed:  
Until for me grew dark again the skies  
Before the light within thine opening eyes.  
Thou knowest the rest.

Again those eyes appear,  
And fill me with strange joy, with stranger fear;  
Joy thus to love thee, fear this love to prove;  
Deep fear to lose my being in thy love!

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

One day I sat upon the rock-built dun  
That overhangs the sea. The morning sun  
Made a broad pathway all of living gold  
Upon the level of the waters cold.  
I fell into a dream stranger than sleep;  
For, sudden flashed from the enchanted deep  
A myriad faces roseate and fair;  
A myriad golden plumes shook in the air,  
Aloft fair forms, half risen from the sea,  
Whiter than foam; and all were loud in glee.  
They smote sweet harps that tingled high and clear,  
And drew into a ring, from far and near,  
Upon the tides that in lulled silence slept,  
And high in song before me, circling swept.

The sea within the ring shone pale and bright,  
And in its depths a land of new delight  
Glittered with towers of rosy pearl and gold,  
And valleys flushed with flowers, and forests old.  
Loudly the voices sang my name and long  
My soul lay drowning in a tide of song;  
I lived in all I saw, and longed to leap  
From my dim world into the shining deep;  
And I had leaped, but swift across the sun  
A shadow passed—and all the host was gone;  
Quiet and dark the wondrous ocean lay,



FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PEOPLE.

## ETHNE IN TORINIS.

And I awoke to the familiar day.  
A shadow now has fallen on my heart;  
I fear to love too much; I fear to part;  
I fear thee as a god come from the tide  
To taste the sweetness of a mortal bride--  
Say, wilt thou lock me in some palace dim,  
Guarded by monsters, silent, cold and grim,  
And feast upon my life below the sea?

Already hast thou stolen life from me:  
Oft on the isle's low margin have I stood  
And loved my shadow shining in the flood,  
A living flower—blue eyes and wet red lip—  
Trembling in smiles of lone companionship;  
It was the fairest thing in all the isle;  
But now, how faint a thing its fairest smile!  
Now thou hast robbed my shadow of all grace,  
Its stolen beauty lives but in thy face;  
And many a glowing captive, fairer still,  
Thine overmastering eyes with beauty fill.  
Sweet robber of the earth and of the air,  
Thine is the spoil of all things that are fair!  
These locks of rippled flame have robbed the dawn,  
Who dark and weeping through the sea is gone;  
All songs of birds and lone waves that rejoice  
Are murmuring in the sounding of thy voice;  
And I have seen these limbs, where winds upbear,  
Voyaging in the sun through golden air!

### ETHNE IN TORINIS.

I faint, I fail. I know no earthly name  
To give unto these winds of singing flame  
In which I waste, consumed. Child, husband, wife  
Are names of love, I know, in human life:  
If these be love, then all of these am I;  
No Bird of Angus wings where now I fly!  
My love would husband thee from every ill,  
For darkness haunts the child of splendour still;  
A wife, would feast upon thy love, thy praise:  
A child, in wonder I would learn thy ways;  
All things are poor beside thee! What am I  
But straw unto this fire where all things die,  
To live in thee anew. O river! to the sea!  
I fall as from a height! I am lost in thee!



## SHAWN MACNEE.

### A STORY OF THE GOOD PEOPLE.

(This story was told me by a young man from Castlebar, James Kenny, who is now living in London. A fine Irish speaker, and one of the best story-tellers I ever heard is James Kenny. If there are merits in the story they are his; if there are faults they are mine. I only regret that I am not strong enough in the Gaelic to do justice to the tale in our proper tongue. I have, however, used the English idiom as we find it on the lips of the Western Gael when he uses the Bearla, an idiom familiar to me in my own youth in Donegal.)

And are you laughing at Them, my boys?

Well, gather around the hearth,

And here is a tale as true as the Book

That will put an end to your mirth.

It was Shawn MacNee, and a young man then

Was Shawn, and well to do;

He had land, and a wife so true and good,

The like of her comes to few.

SHAWN MacNEE.

But little he thought of the good he had,  
And to boast he thought no sin;  
He would sing and dance and with heart of life  
He was leaping out of his skin.

One day for the fair of Castlebar  
He rode on a good young horse,  
With a good thorn stick slung to his side  
And yellow gold in his purse.

What harm had he done Them? I cannot tell,  
But harm he had said or done,  
And that he would find, for They had their way  
Before the set of sun.

The birds were going to sleep in the trees  
And sleepily they sang;  
Shawn took up their song when they left it off,  
And merrily it rang.

And when Shawn left off, who but They took it up  
In music would kill your care,  
As if all the fiddlers in the world  
Were playing up the air.

SHAWN MacNEE.

And a song went with it, oh ! such a song  
On the evening wind went by,  
You would not hear its like in heaven  
Though you stood in the heart of the sky.

As he listened, Shawn had the lift of the heart  
That comes before a fall ;  
He laughed in his heart, but he could not make out  
Where the song came from at all.

His horse stood still, but he pricked it on  
Round a bend of the road, and there  
He saw a bright crowd of folk at sport,  
And it was just like a fair.

Oh, he could not tell the kind of Them  
They were so merry and free :  
He could not see Them as they are  
For They looked like you and me.

A fiddler as old as the wrinkled hills  
On his fiddle was nodding his head,  
But his hands had the life of a hundred hands,  
And would lift from their graves the dead.

SHAWN MacNEE.

And girls and boys were out on the green,  
And flew as the music flew;  
They were red with the dance, and to see them there  
Your heart would go dancing, too.

Then a young man came to the side of the road  
For Shawn to dance with the rest,  
And he leaped from his horse, and soon in the field  
He was footing it with the best.

And after the dance he moved in the crowd,  
Like a man in a happy dream,  
Though he sees some things that make him think  
That the People are not what they seem.

He saw Shawn Ruadh and Manus O'Friel  
Drinking out of a mether;  
He had thought them dead, but, as large as life,  
There they were drinking together.

He saw three old men playing at cards,  
And quarrelling over the game,  
And the Ace of Spades threw a shadow like night,  
And the Heart was a burning flame.

SHAWN MacNEE.

Then the girl he had danced with came to Shawn  
With a methers of beoir to drink;  
But he would not drink, for old tales came back,  
And he did not know what to think.

But she drank herself with her eyes in his eyes,  
And such eyes he had never seen,  
And he took the methers and turned it round,  
And drank where her lips had been.

He drank, and a sleep fell over him  
And he did not know where he was,  
And when he awoke it was break of day  
And he lay in the cold, wet grass.

He looked about and the crowd was gone,  
And he could not find his horse,  
He had lost his stick, and when he looked,  
No money was in his purse.

And then he thought They were tinkers or rogues  
Who had stolen away to the fair,  
And he struck for the road to Castlebar  
Hoping to meet them there.

SHAWN MacNEE.

But he felt himself bedevilled, bewitched,  
When he met a man on the road,  
Who told him the fair was over then,  
And his heart began to forbode.

But he would not believe till another he met,  
Who was driving a flock of sheep.  
“And why are you leaving the fair?” said Shawn.  
And his flesh began to creep.

“And why are you leaving the town,” says he,  
“Before the fair begins?”  
“The Devil fly off with you, leave me alone,  
My sheep are enough for my sins!”

“I bought them yesterday, bother my luck,  
At the fair of Castlebar;  
I bought them for sheep I could easy drive;  
But I find it is greyhounds they are.”

The driver laughed at his own good joke,  
But there came no laugh from Shawn.  
“If you want the fair,” said the driver then,  
“You are late, you omadhaun.”

SHAWN MacNEE.

And when Shawn came into the town  
No sign of a fair was there,  
No stir of life was in the street,  
Nor a beast in the market-square.

His father knew a man in the town  
Who had read in many a text,  
And who knew all things about this world  
And, maybe, about the next.

And he went to him and he told him all,  
And the Wise Man shook his head.  
"You have fallen into Their hands," said he,  
"Who are neither alive nor dead."

"Go home, and of all that has fallen out  
You must never say a word,  
For the hungry Dog of the Hills is not worse  
Than They when their anger is stirred."

And home went Shawn, and a weary man  
He was on the lonely way  
His spirit was dead and his feet were lead  
Through all one dreary day.

SHAWN MacNEE.

And as he walks in the fall of night  
He hears—is it They who pass?—  
A sound he had never heard before,  
Like the trailing of silk on grass.

And bold as he was he shook with the fright,  
With the cold fright he shook;  
There was nothing to see on his right or his left,  
And behind him he dared not look.

And the trailing, rustling, rushing sound  
Grew loud as the noise of the sea;  
He hears voices in rage, and, a hundred times worse,  
He hears little shrill cries of glee.

Then he hears Them calling his name, and he thinks  
They are taking him away.  
“They are on me!” he cries. ‘I am lost! I am  
lost!  
I have come to my last day!’

And forward he falls on his face in the road  
As if there he had been hurled,  
And he feels himself falling in darkness down  
To the bottom of the world.

SHAWN MacNEE.

He lay like the dead, without sight or sense,  
For how long he never knew.  
When he came to himself, in a tremble of dread,  
Like the wind of the hill he flew.

The moon came out, and the moon in the sky  
Ran with him as he ran;  
It mocked him, he thought, with a mouth awry,  
Like the face of an evil man.

He thought in his fear that the road ran, too,  
And that he was standing still,  
And that all his steps were but the steps  
Of a man treading a mill.

He came to a hill, and the hill he thought  
Had never a top at all  
For higher it rose the higher he got  
And threatened him like a wall.

At last, at last, and at very long last  
He wins his weary race;  
He is nearing now the old cross-roads  
That is close to his own place.

SHAWN MacNEE.

But what is that crowd that comes to the cross?  
And what is that Thing they bear?  
And the terror seized on his bones again  
And stirred like a hand in his hair.

But closer he drew, and he stood by the way  
And he bared and bowed his head,  
And trembling he made the Holy Sign  
Though never a prayer he said.

Then sudden he hears a shriek and a shriek,  
And voices in deadly fear,  
A clamour of cries that fills the skies,  
And his heart stands still to hear.

And raising his head he looked on the crowd  
And terror was moving there,  
White faces and lifted hands he saw,  
And eyes, wild eyes, a-stare.

"In the Name of God, what ails you all?"  
And forward a step he strode,  
And the men who carried the Coffin threw  
Their burden in the road.

SHAWN MacNEE.

And over the ditches and over the fields,  
Away with them one and all;  
He hears their cries as they run in the night  
And their curses, as some of them fall.

And wondering he stands in the falling night,  
Alone on the lonely road—  
Yet not alone, for the Coffin was there—  
And what might it forbode?

He stooped over the Thing in fear,  
And by the moon he read  
His Own Name and the Three Good Words  
That are written over the dead.

Was there ever a thing in the world before,  
Was there ever a thing like this?  
“Am I then in Hell?” cried Shawn, “for I know  
This is not the world of Bliss.”

Then in rage that was born of his terror, he ran  
To the loose stone wall by the way,  
And he took a great stone, and he burst the lid—  
But what in the Coffin lay?

SHAWN MacNEE.

His own thorn stick, his good blackthorn  
As in mockery lay there;  
And as he stared like a man of stone  
A laugh skirled in the air.

And home with him then, and like him, my boys,  
May we never have to strive;  
A cloud came over the moon, and he felt  
That the darkness was alive;

And glad as a man in a drowning sea  
Who touches at last the shore,  
He reaches his home and he sees his wife  
As he bursts through his own door.

But her face fell white as the lime on the wall,  
And fear shone in her eyes,  
She put out her hands to ward him off,  
And weak with the terror she cries :

" Oh, why do you come to trouble me, Shawn ?  
And can you not rest with the dead ?  
Three days you were waked, and I mostly alone  
With the candles beside the bed.

SHAWN MacNEE.

"In the Name of God, go back to your rest,  
In the Name of God—" and she fell.  
She lay at her length, and if she were dead  
Or living, he could not tell.

He ran for the doctor, running as fast  
For love as he ran for fear;  
But little good could the doctor do,  
And he went for a priest who was near.

And the priest he looked Shawn up and down,  
And made the sign on his head;  
"Oh, I knew as much," he said, "for I knew  
That you were not the dead.

"Three nights ago and I had a dream,  
And I saw you in a crowd,  
Who danced on a green, and some of them there  
I had seen before in a shroud.

"I saw you drink, and I saw you fall,  
And they loosened your horse on the road,  
And they shaped your stick till it looked like your-  
self,  
But dead, and dabbled with blood.

SHAWN MacNEE.

“ And neighbours found it and carried it home,  
And waked it for the dead ;  
They called me in, but I knew what it was,  
And never a prayer I said.

“ And that is why in the black cross-roads  
They were burying it in the night.”  
Then the priest went home with Shawn and he  
prayed,  
And between them he made it right.

And from that day out not a happier man  
Than Shawn in the North or the South,  
But not a bad word of Them, my boys,  
Ever came out of his mouth.

## THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

The poets all are foolish,  
And some of them are wild,  
Going to taverns and to fairs  
And forgetting wife and child.

What think you of the song-bird  
Who would let his nestlings die,  
Although he sing beside the sun,  
Filling with song the sky?

It was after the time of Padraic,  
And before the Dove of the Cell,  
That Darragh wandered, singing his  
songs  
Of the life he loved so well.

He sang of the heart of battle  
And the hero's rising mood,  
Till he shone like a god, without pity  
or fear,  
And blind with the fury of blood;

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

Of the champing of mighty horses  
Drawn back from the surge of the  
fray;  
Of the maddening chant of the bards  
of war,  
As eager for battle as they.

He sang of the mighty feastings  
When at ease the warriors lie,  
And their cups are wells of red wine  
and mead  
That sparkle and never run dry.

He sang of the Shining Island  
That glitters afar on the main,  
As it opens its golden heart to our  
gaze,  
And is lost in the mists again—

Where hunters through blossoming forests  
Chase golden-antlered deer,  
Or rest by trees and rivers that sing,  
And partake of love without fear.

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

He loved not the laws of Padraic :  
He mourned for the ancient days,  
And the gods and the heroes of old  
renown  
Lived on in his living lays.

The clerics did not love him,  
And called him the Evil Flame  
That would fire their whitening harvest  
of good  
And bring their work to shame.

One day as he wandered, singing,  
By the shore of the western sea,  
He came to a bare green hill and the  
house  
Of a priestly company.

It was fall of day, in summer,  
As he entered for food and rest,  
And a pale monk led him into a room  
Set apart for the welcome guest.

There were travellers there before him—  
Strollers, and singers, like him—  
And sadly they sat at an empty board  
By a rushlight burning dim.

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

The pale monk brought them water  
And mildewed bread to eat.

"On a day of holy fast," he said,  
"Accursed be wine and meat."

They lipped the unfriendly water,  
They crumbled the green-mossed bread.  
"If we may not eat," cried Darragh, and  
laughed,  
"Let us sing and drink instead."

He took wine from his wallet,  
He lifted his harp to his knee,  
And they drank and they sang till the  
old dark house  
Shook with bright minstrelsy.

Then the Abbot came in anger,  
A steady fire in his eyes:  
"The Tongue of Flame in our holy  
house!

Be it lost in hell!" he cries.

"If your hell be the Shining Island,  
It is better than water and bread  
For they feast and they fight and they  
sport and they love  
In the Isle of the Mighty Dead."

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

"I know you, Spreader of Evil,  
A spirit of darkness and strife,  
Clinging even in thoughts of death  
To the flesh and the lies of life."

"O! good is life," said Darragh,  
"And I love it as it flows  
Even at its flood in the hero's heart  
Or the heart of the red rose."

Then sudden he raised his clairseach,  
And sang as he plucked the strings:  
"O! life is good and mightier far  
Than any gift it brings!

"For the heart of life—what is it  
But love, the mighty power?  
And the heart of love is the living joy  
That comes in the fullest hour."

"Who live in the hour shall perish,"  
Said the Abbot, with darkened brow,  
"Though the evil they do or say may  
last  
For long, as your evil now."

## THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

"We began before our beginning  
And we perish not with our span,  
For your fires of hell and the fires of  
the stars  
Are one with the heart of man.

"We are one with life," sang Darragh,  
Unfolding his Druid lore,  
"With the leaf that unfolds, with the  
creatures that swim,  
With the birds that sing and soar."

"You darken the sun!" sang Darragh,  
"You fear to draw life's breath;  
You turn your lives from the stream  
of life  
And house in a house of death!"

The Abbot stood in silence,  
Then slowly he raised his hand.  
"I had almost forgotten," he said at  
last,  
"That I am a prince in the land.

"From the western brink of the Shannon  
To the verge of the western sea  
The power of life and death is mine  
As heir of Conairé.

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

“The sea!—O Mouth of Scandal!  
Listen!—’twere better for thee,  
Than speak as thou dost, to be weighted  
with stone  
And cast into the sea!

“I will save, at your cost, my people  
And yourself from further ill;  
You shall die at the grey of to-morrow’s  
dawn  
On the side of Maudan’s hill.”

At dawn they took him and stripped him  
And bound him to a tree,  
A withered oak on the western hill  
That looked out across the sea.

There Darragh had a vision  
And sang the last of his lays:  
His arms were bound to his naked sides,  
But he lifted his voice in praise:

“I see it, the Western Island!  
Far out on the rim of the sea;  
Its silver palaces shine through the mist  
And its gates open to me!

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

"I hear the trampling of horses  
And I see them as they run  
On the yellow sands, till, in rapture of  
speed,  
The horse and the rider are one!

"I see thee, O Shining Woman!  
Who dazzles across the flood;  
I come to thee through the severing sea  
—Though the sea be darkness and  
blood!"

"He calls upon his demon!  
Let us end the evil shame;  
Let the fire that has blackened our holy  
field  
Go down to the nether flame!"

Then they gathered stones and stoned  
him;  
They smote him body and limb,  
And with blood that flowed 'neath his  
matted hair,  
His shining eyes grew dim.

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

But a monk, whose name was Manus,  
Thrice blessed be his name,  
Lifted up his trembling hands to the  
skies,  
And uttered words of blame;

"Let the weed grow till the harvest,  
For this is the word from above;  
And holy, holy, holy is life,  
But holier mercy and love."

The stones fell from their fingers,  
For their hearts answered his prayer,  
And pity filled the Abbot's heart,  
To see Darragh dying there.

But amongst the crowd was a jester,  
And a heart of hate he bore,  
Though he sang with Darragh and kissed  
him,  
As they drank on the night before.

His grey eyes burned with hatred  
In his tawny, dishevelled head:  
One senseless heart in the yielding crowd,  
That would wish the dying dead.

### THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

He leaped to the side of Darragh,  
And struck with a jagged stone,  
The mouth of song that would sing no  
more,  
Only moan in a death moan.

The bright cool dawn grew clouded,  
The wavering sea grew grey,  
And fear fell on the hearts of all,  
As his red blood flowed away.

Then, slowly his face he lifted,  
And it shone with a strange light;  
Like a man raised up beyond himself,  
He cried in a voice of might:

"Through a mist of blood, through  
darkness,  
I follow the track of a star!  
A fair face gleams and white arms wave  
To the Isle where the Mighty are!"

Then his bonds alone upheld him,  
His head fell on his breast,  
His fingers twitched as if plucking his  
harp,  
And Darragh was at rest.

THE STONING OF DARRAGH.

Still green is the grave of Darragh,  
In which he was laid by his foes,  
And the winds of the West cry over it,  
As the great sea comes and goes.

## THE WASHER BY THE STREAM.

" And how is Paidin now, Mother ? "

" He was worse and talking wild  
But the fit went off and now he sleeps  
As peacefully as a child. . . .

" But why is yourself the colour of death ?  
What thing have you heard or seen ? "

" Don't ask me, mother, the thing I saw  
By the turn of the boreen."

" We are all in the hands of God, my son ;  
What thing did you see or hear ? "

" You know the turn of the boreen  
Where the little stream runs near ?

" I heard a sound as I passed it by  
I had heard before in a dream ;  
My heart beat loud as I heard the sound  
Of the batting of clothes in the stream."

THE WASHER BY THE STREAM.

"A lie, a lie, no brother are you,  
No son, to say the word;  
It was but the hammer from Murrough's forge  
Beyond that you only heard."

"I went down to the stream, mother,  
And I saw a woman alone  
Bending over her work in the dusk  
Pounding clothes on a stone."

"It was Marya gone to bat the clothes  
With the beetle from by the door."  
"This woman raised her head and I saw  
No woman like her before."

"Her face was fair but all white as milk  
And her lips were red as blood:  
Her eyes, blue stars of wandering fire,  
Bewildered me where I stood."

"She bowed down to the water, mother—  
Her red hair fell down as she bowed,  
The linen spread from her hands in the stream  
And I saw a floating shroud."

THE WASHER BY THE STREAM.

" The Cross of Christ between us and harm,  
Go down on your knees, my son,  
And lift up your hands with me to God,  
Whose holy will be done."

## THE MOTHER ON THE SHORE.

O Manus, Manus, my heart is sore,  
Come back, my son, to me.  
Have you left for ever your mother's house,  
For a cold bed in the sea?

O why did I let you leave the shore  
And the waves on Breaghy so loud?  
And the dream that came on the night before,  
When your father passed in a shroud?

O never to see your eyes at the door,  
Never hear your foot come nigh,  
Never watch again your sail go out  
On the sea till it touches the sky.

You will lift the latch to-morrow morn,  
And your laugh will break my sleep.  
Ah God! I can never sleep again,  
And you are gone in the deep.

THE MOTHER ON THE SHORE.

You were all I had in the world, Manus,  
And my heart within you lay :  
O why is the old wheat left in the field,  
And the green corn cut away ?

All day on the shore where the waves are  
white  
I waited your coming in vain ;  
But you may have lain in the wrack at my  
feet :  
I was blind with the tears and the rain.

The waves will not rest until you rest,  
For my sorrow is in the sea.  
All day it cried : " I am bringing him home,"  
But it did not bring you to me.

O Mary, Mother, your heart was sore  
When your Son lay cold on your knee :  
Pity a mother who may not watch  
By her son alone in the sea.

Mary, help me and bring him back,  
Back to me living or dead ;  
Or take me out of the world to him,  
He is more to me than my bread.

PERSONAL.



BATT SCANLAN, FIDDLER.

You bring us laughter, bring us tears,  
And visions of our land;  
Exiled, we lose the fret of years,  
All Ireland in your hand.

The cloud that hides the past departs—  
And what is this you give?  
The fire, the passion of their hearts,  
Who died that we may live.

The heady tides of battle run,  
O white swords! to the mark;  
Joy of the Fighter in the Sun,  
Whose arrows slay the Dark!

And now the strain of Angus rings  
With love, all unafraid,  
And binds all wandering hearts, and brings  
Together man and maid.

BATT SCANLAN, FIDDLER.

And now the singing sea-maid wakes,  
With moonlit wet gold hair,  
And takes the sea with song, and takes  
The deeps of listening air.

You rouse them from their ancient sleep  
In caves beside the sea,  
In caves within the mountains deep,  
The People of the Shee.

They come into the lonely glen,  
Through the dark mountain walls,  
And pace in dance the glimmering green,  
While starry twilight falls.

And the night comes, and now to fill  
The blue-dark of the deep,  
The strings of Dahya sound until  
All sorrow smiles in sleep.

A deeper night is drawing nigh  
To darken human fame :  
The lights go out, and all things die ;  
But here lives on your name.

## "BALLYVOURNEY."

He came from Ballyvourney and we called him  
"Ballyvourney,"

The sweetest name in Erinn that we know,  
And they tell me he has taken now the last, the last  
long Journey,  
And it's young he is, it's young he is so very far  
to go.

He came from Ballyvourney, from the town set in  
the morning

That has caught the lights, the lights of Dawn,  
we have waited for so long,  
And he was Ballyvourney, the Child of Erinn's  
morning

In his hope that shone before him, in his speech  
more sweet than song.

Where are you, Ballyvourney? God is good and  
will be giving

Their own heaven, as they wish it, to the Gael:  
In an island like our island there in joy you will be  
living

Where the simple joys you loved will never fail.

“BALLYVOURNEY.”

There you strike the golden ball and there you will  
be dancing.

Who but you could foot it well? I have seen you  
many a time;

And there you rest by shining trees, where lights of  
heaven are glancing,

Listening to the holy birds that sing the hours in  
chime.

Before our eyes, just like a flower, we saw your life  
unfolding

As day by day you grew in bloom of early man-  
hood's grace:

Ah, Death! to pluck the flower and to snatch from  
our beholding

The head of rippled gold and the happy morning  
face.

## AN IRISH SINGER.

She makes my inmost heart rejoice—  
Her simple Irish grace !  
Her face lends meaning to her voice,  
Her voice unto her face.

The noise of London, like a sea,  
Lifts on the outer air,  
The while she sings her song to me  
Of Ireland green and fair.

She sings it in the olden tongue  
That wailed on Deirdre's lips,  
That sounded high in Oisín's song  
And moans our dark eclipse.

She tells of ancient, simple things  
That never can grow old :  
Of dawn, and May-time blossomings  
And voices of the fold.

AN IRISH SINGER.

I see the silver sallows shake  
Above the meadow stream,  
And hear the birds in heaven awake—  
The blue heaven of her dream.

I hear the shining cattle low  
While yet the morn is new,  
And see their tracks in shadow show  
Upon the glistening dew.

The singer mingles with my dreams  
That rise, a glimmering throng,  
And in her simple beauty seems  
The maiden of her song.

I see her in a lone, dim plain  
Whose green is grey with dew :  
Far off she gazes as to gain  
Beyond the hills of blue.

Forgotten are the household cares,  
Forgot the wandering kine ;  
Her heart is with the youth who fares  
Across the bitter brine.

AN IRISH SINGER.

From quiet plains, over stormy seas,  
Through years that changing flee,  
Out of the buried centuries  
Her song comes home to me.

## AISLING.

To meet her in a place like this  
    So lonely and fantastical  
While hoarsely down the black rock roars  
    The waterfall !

Among the pines the dark wind moans  
    Its ancient, melancholy rune  
And through the flying clouds looks down  
    A pale white moon.

It glints upon her russet hair  
    All torn and tangled in the storm.  
The wanderer's wistful look is hers  
    And bowed her form.

To meet me she has wandered here,  
    To meet me she has wandered oft,  
But now her hands in still reproach  
    She lifts aloft.

AISLING.

Her dear eyes search me through and through—  
To Love the soul lies wholly bare,  
And sorrow takes her like a flood  
And strange despair.

The past is written in the face :  
What deed of mine awakes her woe ?  
My look has filled her eyes with tears  
That sudden flow.

Her face she buries in her hands,  
Weeping she shrinks into the night ;  
The faint moon lost in seas of cloud  
Withdraws her light.

I shake with sudden fears. " All's lost,"  
I cry. " Love's lost for evermore."  
I call her name upon the winds  
That mocking roar.

A sea of lightning fills the sky  
And in the flood below, afar,  
I see her fair face faintly shine,  
A drownèd star.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

O Life! the mighty fire consuming all! we mourn  
That thou too soon didst burn  
This branch of the singing leaves and flowers that  
    trembling shone  
With light from beyond the sun.  
But yet is our sorrow his joy when the Light he  
    followed in gleams  
Ingulfs him in dazzling beams,  
And his heart of love, is lost, in joy unafraid, un-  
    awed,  
In the Burning Heart of God;  
For there came to me in the sorrowing night, in a  
    troubled sleep,  
A dream, a vision deep;  
And I saw over billows of light the heart of the  
    Mystical Rose  
Its flaming leaves unclosed.  
Then a darkness, and out of the darkness was lifted  
    a Babe of Light,  
Its little limbs snow-bright;

LIONEL JOHNSON.

And I knew its face, though his eyes had changed  
to live gold of a glow  
That on earth we do not know;  
And I knew the Hands that uplifted him—O I knew  
whose they were!  
So loving and so fair!  
My unworthy eyes might not see Her face, but in  
wonder I saw  
His look of love and awe;  
And I dream of his golden rest, while the eternal  
movement rolls,  
In the Hands of the Mother of Souls.









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